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United Nations

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

First session
(17-19 May 2010)

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. By its resolution 64/236, the General Assembly decided to organize, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and to establish a preparatory committee to carry out the preparations for the Conference. It further decided that the first session of the Preparatory Committee would be held in 2010 for three days, immediately after the conclusion of the eighteenth session and the first meeting of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

2. The Preparatory Committee held its first session from 17 to 19 May 2010. It held six meetings (1st to 6th), and meetings of its two contact groups.

3. At its 1st meeting, on 17 May, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs opened the session and made an opening statement.

B. Election of officers

4. At its 1st meeting, on 17 May, the Preparatory Committee elected the following members of the Bureau by acclamation:

Co-Chairs:

John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Park In-kook (Republic of Korea)

Vice-Chairs:

Ana Bianchi (Argentina)
Charles Thembani Ntwaagae (Botswana)
Tania Valerie Raguž (Croatia)
Jiří Hlaváček (Czech Republic)
Maged Abdelaziz (Egypt)
Paolo Soprano (Italy)
Asad Majeed Khan (Pakistan)
John Matuszak (United States of America)

5. Also at its 1st meeting, the Preparatory Committee agreed that Tania Valerie Raguž (Vice-Chair, Croatia) would also serve as Rapporteur.

6. At the same meeting, the Co-Chair, Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), informed the Committee that Maria Teresa Mesquita Pessôa (Brazil) would serve as ex officio member of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, on behalf of the host country of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

C. Agenda and organization of work

7. At its 1st meeting, on 17 May, the Preparatory Committee adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document A/CONF.216/PC/1, and approved its organization of work. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference.

4. Organizational and procedural matters.

5. Draft rules of procedure of the Conference.

6. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session.

8. Also at its 1st meeting, upon the proposal of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea), the Preparatory Committee approved the establishment of the following contact groups: Contact Group 1, on the review of the preparatory process, including organizational and procedural matters, leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (see chapter IV below); and Contact Group 2, on the review of the draft rules of procedure for the Conference (see chapter V below).

D. Attendance

9. In accordance with paragraph 23 of General Assembly resolution 64/236, the Preparatory Committee was open-ended to allow for the full and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations and members of the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as other participants in the Commission on Sustainable Development, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and the supplementary arrangements established for the Commission by the Council in its decisions 1993/215 and 1995/201.

10. A large number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and representatives of major groups also attended the session.

11. The list of participants of the first session of the Preparatory Committee is contained in document A/CONF.216/PC/INF.1.

E. Conclusion of the session

12. At its 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Secretary-General of the United Nations addressed the Preparatory Committee.

13. At the same meeting, the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda) made a statement and declared closed the first session of the Committee.

F. Documentation

14. The list of documents before the first session of the Preparatory Committee is contained in annex IV.

Chapter III

Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference

15. The Preparatory Committee considered the progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference (agenda item 3) at its 1st to 6th meetings, from 17 to 19 May 2010.

16. At the 1st meeting of the Committee, on 17 May, the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs introduced the report of the Secretary-General under the item (A/CONF.216/PC/2).

17. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 17 May, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the topic, "Assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development", under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda).

18. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 17 and 18 May, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the topic, "Addressing new and emerging challenges", under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea).

19. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 18 May, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the topic, "A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication", under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea).

20. At its 4th and 5th meetings, on 18 and 19 May, the Committee held an interactive discussion on the topic, "Institutional framework for sustainable development", under the chairmanship of the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda).

Action taken

21. At the 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Co-Chair (Antigua and Barbuda) introduced the Co-Chairs' summary on the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee on agenda item 3 (see annex I).

22. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Yemen (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Spain (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Cuba, Australia, Egypt, the United States, Japan, Guatemala, Grenada (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Alliance of Small Island States), Switzerland, Brazil, Norway and the Russian Federation.

23. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the non-governmental organizations major group.

Chapter IV

Organizational and procedural matters: report of Contact Group 1 on the review of the preparatory process, including organizational and procedural matters, leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012

24. At its 1st meeting, on 17 May 2010, the Preparatory Committee, upon the proposal of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea), approved the establishment of Contact Group 1 to review the preparatory process, including organizational and procedural matters (agenda item 4), leading up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. The Contact Group held five meetings, which were co-facilitated by Vice-Chairs Paolo Soprano (Italy) and Asad Majeed Khan (Pakistan).

25. At its 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee heard statements by the co-facilitators (Italy and Pakistan) of Contact Group 1 on the outcome of the Group's deliberations, which was circulated in an informal paper, in English only.

Action taken

26. At its 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee decided to include the report of the co-facilitators (Italy and Pakistan) on the deliberations of Contact Group 1 in the report on its first session (see annex II).

Chapter V

Draft rules of procedure for the Conference: report of Contact Group 2 on the review of the draft rules of procedure for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012

27. At its 1st meeting, on 17 May 2010, the Preparatory Committee, upon the proposal of the Co-Chair (Republic of Korea), approved the establishment of Contact Group 2 to review the draft rules of procedure for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (agenda item 5). The Contact Group held five meetings, which were co-facilitated by Vice-Chairs Ana Bianchi (Argentina) and John Matuszak (United States).

28. At its 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee heard statements by the co-facilitators (Argentina and the United States) of Contact Group 2 on the outcome of the Group's deliberations, which was circulated in an informal paper, in English only.

29. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Egypt (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Spain (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Cuba.

Action taken

30. At its 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee decided to include the report of the co-facilitators (Argentina and the United States) on the deliberations of Contact Group 2 in the report on its first session (see annex III).

Chapter VI
Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session

31. At the 6th meeting, on 19 May 2010, the Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee, Tania Valerie Raguž (Croatia), introduced the draft report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session (A/CONF.216/PC/1/L.1) (agenda item 6).

32. At the same meeting, the Rapporteur orally corrected the draft report.

Action taken

33. At its 6th meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee decided to adopt the draft report, as orally corrected, and entrusted the Rapporteur (Croatia), in collaboration with the secretariat, with its finalization.

Annex I

Summary by the Co-Chairs on the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee on agenda item 3, "Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference"

1. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was opened on 17 May 2010 by Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The Committee elected the 10 members of the Bureau, including the two co-chairs, Park In-kook, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, and John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, the rapporteur of the session, Tania Valerie Raguž of Croatia, and Maged A. Abdelaziz of Egypt, Ana Bianchi of Argentina, Jiří Hlaváček of the Czech Republic, Asad Majeed Khan of Pakistan, John M. Matuszak of the United States, Charles T. Ntwaagae of Botswana and Paolo Soprano of Italy as members of the Bureau. Maria Teresa Mesquita Pessôa of Brazil was designated as an ex officio member of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee.

2. Two contact groups were established, one addressing the preparatory process (headed by Asad Majeed Khan of Pakistan and Paolo Soprano of Italy), the other addressing the rules of procedure for the Conference (headed by Ana Bianchi of Argentina and John M. Matuszak of the United States).

3. The designated Secretary-General of the Conference, Sha Zukang, emphasized in his opening remarks that he would oversee the work of the secretariat in support of the preparatory process with the utmost transparency. The dedicated secretariat of the Conference would be located in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with staff from the Division for Sustainable Development and seconded from various United Nations entities. A departmental task force would be established to support the preparatory process. Inter-agency collaborative mechanisms would contribute to the preparatory process, along with the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the Environmental Management Group and the United Nations Development Group. The meeting adopted the agenda. Tariq Banuri, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, introduced the report of the Secretary-General and emphasized that significant development results of recent years needed to be sustained.

4. Governments, United Nations entities and representatives of major groups made statements calling for an ambitious, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome of the Conference. A number of participants called for a short and focused outcome document. Some indicated that there was a need for the sort of sharp policy focus provided by the clear goals and targets contained in the Millennium Development Goals, and in effect proposed expanding the Millennium Development Goals to encompass new sustainable development goals. One delegation stated that efforts should be made to work towards a strong consensus on behalf of humanity and the planet.

5. Speakers highlighted the principal objectives of the Conference, as established in General Assembly resolution 64/236, namely, securing renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assessing progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and addressing new and emerging challenges. They drew attention to the two themes of the Conference: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

6. Many speakers noted that sustainable development was key to attaining the Millennium Development Goals and that, in its deliberations, the Conference should give equal weight to each of the three pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection. The world could not afford to choose between environmental protection, economic growth and social equity. Speakers stressed the need to accelerate the convergence between the environmental pillar and the social and economic pillars.

7. To renew political commitment to sustainable development, delegations and stakeholders called for a rekindling of the "spirit of Rio". Many highlighted the importance of engaging all stakeholders at the national and local levels and youth in particular, with one speaker referring to the Conference as "Rio for 20-somethings".

8. The sustainable development principles and commitments articulated in Stockholm in 1972 and Rio in 1992 remained valid today, but some delegations suggested that they reflected the realities of the twentieth century, not the new millennium. Others insisted that, as countries had not yet delivered adequately on those commitments, any renewed political commitment should first and foremost consist of heightened resolve to implement prior commitments.

9. In an effort to determine the causes of the persistent gap in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, speakers called for an honest assessment of the progress to date, including a clear evaluation of what had already been delivered in terms of means of implementation. On the one hand, a new spirit of partnership between developed and developing countries was invoked; on the other, it was noted that the global partnership for development of Goal 8 remained elusive. The hope was expressed that the Conference could bridge the trust gap between developed and developing countries evident in the climate change negotiations.

10. Emerging challenges to sustainable development included not only the recent global financial crisis and economic recession, as well as the food and energy crises, but also climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, water scarcity and natural disasters. Delegations noted that many of these challenges predated the financial crisis and global recession.

11. Some speakers made a strong case for the co-benefits of a green economy with respect to development and social equity. One speaker stressed that social equity needed to be central to a green economy if it was to contribute to sustainable development. Others saw a green economy as a set of policies to transition to low-carbon development. Relatedly, it was mentioned that a green economy should be built on clean energy, resource efficiency and the creation of decent jobs. A number of delegations observed that there was not one but various proposals for a green economy, the costs and benefits of which needed to be better understood. The concept of a green economy had stirred a much-needed debate. Some delegations indicated what they believed a green economy should not involve, namely, the

privatization of nature and natural assets. Other speakers cautioned against associating a green economy with trade and financial conditionalities. In general, there was a sense that a green economy should not be a straitjacket but a concept sufficiently broad and flexible to accommodate a diversity of national and local approaches. Indeed, a green economy was already being defined at the grass-roots level by practice on the ground.

12. With regard to the institutional framework for sustainable development, a consensus was noted on the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation among international organizations in respect of environmental agreements. Still, divergent views existed on how to enhance the efficiency of the current United Nations system in the area of sustainable development. The need to examine the workings of the Commission on Sustainable Development was mentioned, as was the work being led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on reforming international environmental governance. Some delegations referred to the need to look at a broader set of institutions, including those working in the financial and trade sectors, and to determine how they could contribute more effectively to sustainable development.

13. Speakers called for a transparent and inclusive preparatory process that fully engaged civil society and all major groups. New media and Web tools needed to be used effectively for outreach to civil society, in particular youth.

14. Several speakers stressed the need for an efficient and focused preparatory process. A number warned against duplication of other processes and asked how other processes could support preparations for the Conference in 2012. Some called for the establishment of an intersessional programme of work involving open-ended working groups in order to address the difficult issues on the agenda.

15. Delegates made a few proposals for work to be undertaken in preparation for the second session of the Preparatory Committee, including:

(a) Preparation of a road map and timetable for the whole preparatory process;

(b) Preparation of a list of background documents to be prepared for the second session;

(c) Identification of United Nations agencies and programmes that could provide expert input on themes and topics to support the work of the secretariat.

Assessing the progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development

16. Progress in implementing the goals and objectives of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development had been inconclusive and uneven. Despite some achievements on the ground, most notably on reducing poverty and improving access to education and better health care in some areas, substantial challenges remained. These achievements were unevenly distributed, with wide disparities across regions.

17. There were persistent implementation gaps relating to poverty eradication, food security, income inequality, maintenance of biodiversity, combating climate change, reducing pressure on ecosystems and fisheries, access to clean water and sanitation and the full participation of women in implementing internationally agreed goals, reflecting a fragmented approach to achieving sustainable development goals.

18. Some speakers noted that the income and development gap between many low-income and high-income countries had continued to widen, and that this posed a challenge for sustainable development.

19. Many delegations noted that no major changes had occurred in consumption and production patterns since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and that fundamental changes were indispensable for global sustainable development. They called for actions to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns, with developed countries taking the lead in accordance with the Rio principles, notably that of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

20. Also mentioned as a remaining gap was a lack of mutually coherent policies and approaches supportive of sustainable development in the areas of finance, investment, trade, capacity-building and technology transfer.

21. Efforts at achieving sustainable development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, had been further hindered by the recent financial and economic crises, which had adversely affected economic performance, eroded hard-won gains and increased the number of people living in extreme poverty.

22. Strong political impetus was needed to bridge implementation gaps, and Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States were mentioned as deserving special attention and support.

23. Many delegations stated that an examination of the underlying factors contributing to slow progress pointed to the need for enhanced means of implementation, a fair and equitable multilateral trade system and the elimination of harmful subsidies. Technology transfer, technology cooperation and training and capacity development were also highlighted as essential. Speakers mentioned that human capital was central to sustainable development, and stressed the importance of strong national leadership for progress on sustainable development.

24. Many delegations noted that inadequate financial support had hampered the ability of developing countries to take action on sustainable development and had limited their access to modern, clean and environmentally sound technologies. Support for capacity-building, including for national sustainable development plans and strategies, was also needed. Official development assistance (ODA) had lagged behind commitments in some cases, although many donor countries had substantially increased aid and had taken action to more efficiently coordinate and distribute aid. The commitment to double aid to Africa by 2010, as agreed by the Group of Eight summit in Gleneagles, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in 2005, might not be reached. In addition to an increase in ODA, many participants proposed that innovative financial measures and mechanisms be fully explored.

25. Debt posed constraints for many developing countries and an effective, equitable, durable and development-oriented solution would be a positive step towards sustainable development.

26. An integrated, holistic and balanced approach to sustainable development needed to be adopted at the national, regional and international levels, one that fully accounted for economic, social and environmental aspects elaborated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and reiterated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Many delegations noted the need, at the national level, to refine strategies and sharpen policy perspectives aimed at effectively implementing the outcomes of major summits on sustainable development. This in turn needed to be complemented by stronger and more effective mechanisms of international and regional support, and significantly greater financial commitments. A broader notion of rebalancing was introduced with a view to closing gaps between developed and developing countries.

27. All countries and stakeholders needed to enhance their efforts on concrete actions and measures to achieve sustainable development. Success stories and policies that had worked needed to be identified and analysed, and this should include efforts to determine how best those policies fitted and could be implemented in different contexts and how they could be scaled up.

28. Good governance was important for achieving sustainable development goals. The involvement of the private sector, including through public-private partnerships, was particularly important. Several delegations emphasized enhanced corporate social responsibility.

29. Indicators to measure progress on achieving sustainable development goals existed and had been utilized by some, but information and data gaps remained. Indicators were also needed to assess vulnerabilities of countries to the various crises confronting them, including climate change and the financial crisis. Standardized information collection guidelines for countries would be useful. The collection of quantitative information on financial and technology flows could be beneficial in addressing inadequate funding for sustainable development and analysing technology transfer needs.

30. Input by relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP, on gap assessment would enhance the preparatory process and contribute positively to the Conference outcome. Improved inter-agency collaboration and coordination would enable the Conference to benefit from the expertise and competence of various organizations, for example UNDP, in reporting and awareness-raising instruments related to poverty eradication, and UNEP, through such assessment tools as the *Global Environment Outlook*. Contributions by multilateral institutions and the scientific community to assessments on progress made and gaps in implementation would also be valuable for the preparatory process.

31. The secretariat was asked to undertake further quantitative assessments on implementation gaps and shortfalls and measures to improve the reliability and availability of indicators for measuring progress on sustainable development.

32. Governments and major groups could be invited to provide information by responding to focused questions, to be prepared by the secretariat, pertaining to progress made and gaps in implementation. On that basis, a summary report with

conclusions could be submitted by the Secretary-General of the Organization to the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

Addressing new and emerging challenges

33. New and emerging sustainable development issues included the financial and economic crisis, and the food and energy crises. Other important challenges included climate change, biodiversity, desertification, water scarcity, increasing frequency of natural disasters and the ability to prepare for and recover from disasters. Globalization, while facilitating growth and poverty eradication, had also increased economic instability. Those crises and challenges had impacts on standards of living, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the health of the people of developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable.

34. Within its agreed thematic focus, the Conference was expected to address pertinent new and emerging issues, including with a view to increasing resilience at the national and international levels, supporting efforts to cope with negative impacts and, if possible, preventing any recurrence of similar crises in the future.

35. Many of the challenges of sustainable development were not necessarily new, but when faced at the same time as the multiple global crises, they compromised the ability of developing countries to respond effectively. Immediate and collective efforts were needed if sustainable development was to be achieved.

36. Some delegations suggested that the multiple crises called into question the prevailing global development model. A number pointed to the need for indicators of well-being beyond the gross domestic product. Others called for a review of the performance of markets over the past 20 years, suggesting that they may not have been adequate to the challenge of allocating scarce natural resources, protecting the environment and promoting social development. In the view of one delegation, the ecological crises currently being faced arose from our treating the Earth as a thing rather than as a home, and failing to recognize that we humans were part of the Earth's system.

37. The global food crisis had not yet been overcome, and hunger, malnutrition and lack of food security remained a great challenge to sustainable development.

38. Public health and prevention of communicable diseases had also been identified as an important area for national action and international cooperation.

39. Investment in childhood and adult education was necessary for sustainable economic growth and could contribute to supporting a green economy. Efficient education and training systems at all levels, with a view to enhancing career pathways in the sciences, technology and engineering, should be available to all.

40. Initiatives to mitigate climate change and adapting to its anticipated impacts involved new and emerging issues, technologies and areas for international cooperation. New global partnerships for technology transfer had been proposed, also with a view to enhancing a global transition to a low-carbon economy.

41. The numerous recent natural disasters had shown the importance of preparedness and increased international cooperation in response efforts. New information and communication technologies could inform decision-making and real-time problem solving, including in times of disaster.

42. The continuing loss of global biodiversity and of cultural diversity continued to affect prospects for sustainable development. Many resources, in particular fish stocks, were at serious risk of depletion. The current oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico highlighted the vulnerability of all countries, developed and developing, to environmental disasters.

43. Delegations suggested that imbalances in international economic governance should be addressed at the Conference and not solely by the Group of 20 (G-20), noting that attention should be paid not only to strengthening competitiveness in developed countries, but also in developing countries.

44. International migration was mentioned as an emerging issue that was limiting the development of scientific and technological capacity in developing countries. Developing country expertise and perspectives should be incorporated into scientific and technical assessments to strengthen links among science, education and policy.

45. Effectively responding to emerging challenges required the involvement of all stakeholders, including women and youth.

46. Consideration needed to be given to new forms of collaboration or to international mechanisms that could enhance the accountability of developed countries and ensure the implementation of their commitments, while developing countries required more effective enabling approaches and support to enhance their sustainable development.

47. Many delegations indicated that the Conference should identify ways for the United Nations system to increase capacity-building support for implementing national sustainable development plans and strategies in developing countries.

48. A number of delegations referred to the need to explore innovative financing mechanisms, while others pointed to a need to assess the resource mobilization potential of any proposed innovative source or mechanism of international financing.

49. A proposal was advanced for the creation of a stimulus package for developing countries that would include new and additional financing, technology transfer and relaxation of intellectual property rights.

50. Access to clean drinking water and sanitation also remained a crucial sustainable development challenge, as did water availability more generally. A range of efforts were under way to protect increasingly scarce freshwater resources, including through improved water resources management and reduced water pollution, but increased action was imperative. The midterm review of progress in the implementation of the International Decade of Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015, was important in that regard.

51. Green job creation was cited as an important element of the response to the current global economic crisis, and it was stressed that in the transition to a green economy, workforce aspects, including worker retraining, needed to be adequately addressed.

52. While recognizing the importance of addressing the new and emerging issues and challenges mentioned above, some delegations noted that these could be accommodated within the thematic focus on a green economy and institutions for

sustainable development. Based on that view, the agenda for the Conference did not need to be expanded.

A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Definitions and interpretations

53. There was no broad consensus on the meaning of a green economy. In the Nusa Dua Declaration, the UNEP Governing Council had acknowledged the need to further define the term "green economy". There was, however, a consensus that a green economy needed to be understood in the context of sustainable development and consistent with the Rio principles. There was no need to redefine sustainable development, and a green economy was not a substitute for sustainable development. According to one definition, a green economy could be conceived of as a means of achieving sustainable development goals, which by and large had not yet been realized anywhere. According to another, a green economy was seen as a pathway to sustainable development, or as various pathways, as many delegations emphasized that there was no one-size-fits-all but many possible green economy or green growth paths, depending on national circumstances.

54. Several delegations noted that a green economy, by promoting greater efficiency in the use of energy and natural resources and new technologies for clean energy and cleaner production, could create new opportunities for economic growth. Suitable national policy frameworks would need to be put in place to drive a green economy transition, promote sustainable consumption and production patterns and bring economic activity more closely into line with the carrying capacities of ecosystems.

55. The green economy concept needed to be broad and flexible enough to be relevant and adaptable to the needs of countries at different levels of development, with differing national capacities and priorities. As one delegation stated, a green economy was about making more forward-looking choices, regardless of a country's economy. A green economy framework should not be a straitjacket, but serve as a guide and support to national initiatives and policies. Many policies and measures were already being implemented at the national and the grass-roots levels, and those efforts could be described as building a green economy. Local authorities referred to the vast array of innovative green economy policies and measures, such as eco-budgeting, being introduced at the municipal level. A green economy framework might help Governments to take a more holistic view of economic policies for sustainable development. If it served that purpose, then it could prove useful to Governments.

56. A number of delegations expressed reservations about a particular interpretation of the concept of a green economy that was equated with the "marketization" of nature and natural resources. It was suggested that unregulated markets had been a contributing factor to environmental degradation and thus their ability to contribute to a solution was questionable.

57. An alternative view was proposed, in which valuing ecosystems and their resources was seen not as facilitating their further exploitation, but rather as

impressing upon human beings the full costs of destroying nature and the full benefits of protecting the natural resource base for present and future generations.

58. While some delegations spoke of green growth, others referred to a green economy, and in general no clear distinction was made between the two terms.

Green economy, poverty eradication and social development

59. Concerns were raised about the social content of the concept of a green economy, which according to some delegations seemed to focus on the economy-environment interface without explicitly accounting for the social pillar of sustainable development.

60. Several delegations spoke of how a green economy transition could create decent work, and stressed the importance of education and skills formation for the workforce in efforts aimed at realizing that potential. It was suggested that green growth was in general more labour-intensive than "brown" growth, and should therefore lead to net job creation. Others referred to the work of the International Labour Organization and UNEP on green jobs, which identified employment opportunities associated with green economy policies and measures. One speaker cited the numbers of jobs created in various "green" sectors in different countries. Still, concerns persisted about possible job losses in some economic sectors during a green economy transition and the need to address adjustment costs for workers and others was underlined, including through investment in job retraining and social protection.

61. A number of delegations emphasized that, insofar as a green economy involved the sustainable management and use of the natural resource base, it was essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goal of poverty eradication, as the poor depended heavily on that natural resource base for their livelihoods. Some delegations stressed that, in their national context, a green economy had to address the need to create sustainable livelihoods, including for poor people in rural areas. Some highlighted the role of small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular with respect to job creation and innovation.

62. Small island developing States and least developed countries in particular expressed the expectation that a green economy should address their concerns related to eradicating poverty, reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience. Some emphasized that a green economy was the only way forward to address such challenges as climate change and its impacts.

The international context for a green economy

63. A supportive international policy and institutional environment was essential to promoting a green economy. It was stressed that international trade was essential for sustainable development. International support to the transition to a green economy should not lead to conditionalities, parameters or standards which could generate unjustified or unilateral restrictions in the areas of trade, financing, ODA or other forms of international assistance. The multilateral trade system should foster freer trade in environmentally sound technologies and products, improve market access for developing countries and boost technology transfer from developed to developing countries. Innovative financing mechanisms to support a green economy transition were mentioned, including a global trust fund for a green economy.

64. International green economy initiatives must not limit the sovereign rights of countries over their natural resources, as set forth in Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and green protectionism must be avoided.

65. All delegations stressed the need to reaffirm the importance of sustainable development and the Rio principles, as well as other sustainable development outcomes since Rio.

66. Delegations and major groups made a range of proposals on what could be achieved at the Conference with regard to a green economy.

67. The Conference should avoid a theoretical discussion of a green economy. There were several calls for concrete actions, policies and measures that supported the achievement of the Rio and Johannesburg agendas and the Millennium Development Goals. Some delegations mentioned that impacts on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals should be a criterion for assessing proposed policies for a green economy.

68. Some delegations suggested that the Conference should aim to endorse a set of principles to guide a transition to a green economy, draw up a road map for that transition and a prepare a well-stocked toolkit that countries at different levels of development and with differing national circumstances could use to guide them towards a green-economy, green-growth path. Many stressed the importance of sharing practical experiences and lessons learned on building a green economy.

69. Others said that the Conference needed to go beyond simply agreeing on principles and focus on practical implementation, in which regard the means of implementation, including trade, technology transfer, capacity-building and financial resources, required consideration.

70. Some delegations called for the Conference to reach consensus on a "global green new deal", with a clear indication of the investments needed — both public and private — for developing countries to realize a green economy transition, and the policies needed to support and stimulate such investments, which would be made at the discretion of developing countries. A related proposal was presented for the endorsement of a "green stimulus package" for developing countries.

71. Several countries highlighted the link between a green economy and sustainable consumption and production. Some mentioned that the Conference could contemplate the adoption of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, which was expected to be negotiated at the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

72. Several delegations requested that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNEP and other relevant organizations cooperate to prepare a study, to be available for the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee, which would assess both the benefits and the challenges and risks associated with a green economy transition. It was suggested that such a study could be undertaken with the assistance of a panel of scientists from developed and developing countries. The issues that should be addressed in the study included:

(a) Macroeconomic policy implications of pursuing a green economy transition;

(b) Potential loss of competitiveness of some industries, a source of comparative advantage for some countries;

(c) Risk of "green protectionism", owing to the legitimization of certain "green" subsidies which could distort trade;

(d) Potential contribution of a green economy to poverty eradication through the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

Some delegations suggested that this work could include a compilation of existing experiences and good practices involving green economy policies and measures in different countries. Some also emphasized that, in this and other work, the secretariat should draw upon the substantial body of existing work within the United Nations system and should avoid duplication.

73. Some delegations requested the secretariat to prepare documentation for the second session of the Preparatory Committee that would shed further light on the range of policy options and policy mixes that could be used by countries embarking on green economy pathways, referring to the seven areas listed in the report of the Secretary-General, as follows:

(a) Internalizing externalities into prices to reflect true environmental and social costs;

(b) Sustainable public procurement policies;

(c) Ecological tax reforms;

(d) Public investment in sustainable infrastructure — including public transport, renewable energy and retrofitting of existing infrastructure and buildings for improved energy efficiency — and natural capital, to restore, maintain, and where possible, enhance the stock of natural capital;

(e) Public support to green innovation and to research and development on environmentally sound technologies;

(f) Strategic investment and development policies to lay the foundation for socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth;

(g) Social policies to reconcile social goals with existing or proposed green economy policies.

74. Delegations called on the United Nations system to support the Conference secretariat with staff seconded from United Nations organizations (UNEP and others), and also urged the secretariat to work with international financial and trade institutions on the preparations for the Conference.

75. One delegation announced the creation of the Global Green Growth Institute, which would develop country-specific green growth models, and indicated that the Institute looked forward to collaborating with the United Nations system on analytical work relating to the assessment of green growth/green economy policies, in particular in developing countries.

Institutional framework for sustainable development

76. An effective institutional framework for sustainable development was deemed crucial for ensuring the full implementation of Agenda 21, and the follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development was deemed crucial for meeting emerging sustainable development challenges. Sustainable development was also highlighted as important in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

77. Delegations therefore considered that the 2012 Conference should ensure that political commitment was renewed and efforts redoubled so that institutions currently involved in implementing the sustainable development agenda within the United Nations system became more efficient and effective, through improved synergies and the provision of adequate resources.

78. Many delegations attributed the lack of progress on the sustainable development agenda to the diffuse, fragmented nature of the existing architecture for sustainable development, which had led to increased duplication and poor coordination.

79. Divergent views were expressed on the best way to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the sustainable development architecture within the United Nations system. On the one hand, raising the profile of the environmental dimension of sustainable development was considered desirable. On the other, the importance of preserving the balance among the three pillars was emphasized. The need to promote greater convergence among the environmental, social and economic pillars was underscored.

80. It was broadly agreed that the United Nations should provide stronger leadership and a more coherent framework to support both policy formulation and implementation of sustainable development objectives.

81. In that regard, many speakers affirmed that the Commission on Sustainable Development was the high-level intergovernmental body responsible for sustainable development and the principal forum for the consideration of issues related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Delegations, however, underscored the need to strengthen its role and effectiveness, in particular as a forum for promoting dialogue and for the provision of policy guidance.

82. Delegations reiterated that the Commission should become more forward-looking and action-oriented. An enhanced role for the Commission would thus include not only responsibility for reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, but also for ensuring coherence in the implementation of sustainable development objectives through the promotion of initiatives and partnerships.

83. Many delegations recommended that the role and working methods of the Commission should be evaluated, with a view to making it more interactive and to exploring a more dynamic framework for future needs while respecting its multi-year programme of work. Future discussions on the institutional framework

for sustainable development should be guided by chapter XI of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.[a]

84. Several delegations called on the Commission to promote more effective inter-agency coordination, which would in turn ensure greater information-sharing and cooperation among all United Nations entities within the sustainable development framework. Others emphasized the need for closer attention to be given to the integration of Commission decisions into the programmes of other United Nations bodies. Delegations and major groups also underscored the important role played by the Commission in facilitating the meaningful participation of civil society through its major groups programme, and in its valuable contribution to implementation through the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

85. Delegations called for a broader embrace of institutions in pursuing greater systemic coherence on the sustainable development agenda and recognized that the United Nations organizations were not the only actors in the global institutional architecture of sustainable development. Some conveyed the desirability of creating an umbrella structure for sustainable development, while giving due consideration to the possible roles and functions of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Council and UNEP, and taking into account the need for streamlining work under the multilateral environmental agreements. Delegates made a strong call for enhanced synergies among those agreements, noting the successful outcome of the simultaneous extraordinary sessions of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, in particular with regard to chemicals and wastes, as an important step in that regard.

86. Delegations highlighted the need to address the challenges presented by the existing institutional complexity within the environmental framework. The strengthening of international environmental governance in the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development was identified as being of particular concern. It was noted that the current system of international environmental governance was incoherent, fragmented, lacking synergies, inefficient and ineffective, and had resulted in duplicative processes and imposed heavy meeting and reporting burdens, in particular on developing countries.

87. A strong case was thus made for rationalization of the international environmental institutional framework. In that regard, many delegations affirmed that the consultative process on the reform of international environmental governance, launched by the UNEP Governing Council at its eleventh special session, was an important contribution to the debate on sustainable development governance in the context of the Conference. Speakers expressed interest in the outcome of the upcoming twenty-sixth session of the UNEP Governing Council, in which the Council should address recommendations on enhanced synergies among international environmental institutions, including the multilateral environmental agreements.

88. A gradual approach towards governance reforms was sought by some; others favoured more fundamental and far-reaching reform proposals. Much interest was expressed in the international environmental governance reform process, the

[a] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

successful conclusion of which would require strong political will. The importance of improved public participation in the process was also emphasized.

89. Assisting developing countries in implementing environmental commitments and multilateral environmental agreements was seen by many delegations as a major goal of strengthened international environmental governance, requiring capacity-building, financial resources, technology transfer, information-sharing and more effective review and monitoring systems.

90. Some delegations also emphasized the need for rationalizing sustainable development decision-making and for taking action at the national and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity.

91. Many delegations focused on the need for strengthened scientific and technological capacity; support for the development and strengthening of local and national institutions within the sustainable development framework; support for the development of national sustainable development strategies; and the need for increased funding, in particular in developing countries. The needs of the very poor and vulnerable were also highlighted.

92. Speakers drew attention to the importance of ensuring that institutional frameworks for sustainable development at the national level were made part of the Conference process. Suggestions included the establishment of multi-stakeholder national councils on sustainable development and their integration into national decision-making processes, as well as the establishment of dedicated institutions to promote an integrated approach to sustainable development.

93. Delegations emphasized the need for a stronger institutional framework for sustainable development, with a sharper policy perspective and increased emphasis on implementation. In order to facilitate greater convergence and coherence of United Nations system activities on sustainable development, delegations suggested that synergies within existing frameworks, such as the United Nations strategy for system-wide coherence, "Delivering as one", be explored and pursued, with a view to enhancing coordination and ensuring more efficient implementation. Delegations pointed to the need for adequate funds to support the international institutional framework for sustainable development and suggested that a role for the Global Environment Facility in that regard be explored.

Development, at all stages of the preparatory process. States were invited to finance the contribution and participation of major groups of developing countries at all stages of the preparatory process and at the Conference itself.

(e) Requested the secretariat to seek information, inputs and contributions, including through a questionnaire addressed to Member States, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, major groups and other stakeholders, on their experiences, including success factors, challenges and risks with respect to the objective and themes of the Conference. The deadline for submitting inputs would be 31 October 2010.

(f) Requested the secretariat, with the guidance of the Bureau, to prepare a synthesis of the information and contributions collected in accordance with paragraph 5 above.

(g) Called upon the secretariat to continue utilizing the website of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as a powerful tool for gathering and sharing information, and building on the experiences gained through that website.

(h) Called upon the secretariat and relevant United Nations organizations, in consultation with the Bureau, to organize within existing resources, open-ended informal intersessional meetings for a total duration of not more than six days, including one two-day meeting, to be held between the release of the synthesis requested above and the second session of the Preparatory Committee, and two two-day meetings between the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee, the final intersessional meeting taking place no later than eight weeks prior to the third session of the Preparatory Committee. The objective of these meetings would be to hold focused, substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference.

Annex III

Report of the Co-Facilitators on the deliberations of Contact Group 2 on the draft rules of procedure for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012

1. Contact Group 2 met four times. At its initial meeting, the group identified the issues to be addressed. At its second meeting, the group proceeded with a full reading of the draft rules of procedure, as contained in document A/CONF.216/PC/4. Several questions were raised regarding the reflection of the participation of the European Union and Palestine in the document. A representative of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat attended the third meeting of the Contact Group to hear those questions. The representative took note of some of the questions but informed the Co-Chairs that, in order to provide a definitive response, any questions needed to be submitted in writing and transmitted by the Preparatory Committee by means of a formal submission. At the fourth meeting of the Contact Group, the Group of 77 and China raised concerns about those issues and proposed including the following questions in the modified text: (a) the current validity and application of paragraph (a) of decision 1995/201 of the Economic and Social Council throughout the whole document; and (b) whether a decision was required by the Council formalizing the replacement of "European Community" with "European Union".

2. The European Union objected to the inclusion of those questions, citing decision 1995/201 of the Council and document PRO/NV/Denomination Change — European Union, dated 31 December 2009, and also mentioning as an example their participation in the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

3. There was no agreement on forwarding the modified draft rules of procedure to the plenary. Although the Contact Group held a reading of the entire text, many delegations noted the need to consult with capitals before agreement could be reached on proposed modifications to the original text.

Annex IV

List of documents before the first session of the Preparatory Committee

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
A/CONF.216/PC/1	2	Provisional agenda
A/CONF.216/PC/2	3	Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
A/CONF.216/PC/3	4	Organizational and procedural matters
A/CONF.216/PC/4	5	Draft provisional rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
A/CONF.216/PC/L.1	4	Draft report of first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
A/CONF.216/PC/INF.1		List of participants

Annex V

Side events

1. A total of seven side events were held on the margins of the official meetings of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The side events were organized by a diverse range of stakeholders, including international organizations, Governments and major groups.

2. The side events featured dynamic interactive discussions focused on the main themes of the Conference — the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

3. Side event guidelines, schedules and highlights can be found on the website of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at http://un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/resources/perpcomm1_doc_other_UNCSD_rio_plus_20.shtml.

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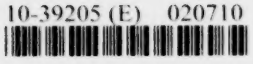

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